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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 002011

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TAGS: PREL BR

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: LULA TOUTS FOREIGN POLICY INDEPENDENCE
FROM US, EUROPE

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION PHIL CHICOLA FOR R
EASONS 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) Summary. During a speech on 1 October Brazilian President Lula touted the independent trajectory of his foreign policy, and criticized his predecessor's as intellectually submissive and overly oriented towards the United States and Europe. Brazilian foreign policy observers suggest the speech was intended as red meat for his leftist base meant to mark clear breaks from Western interests at a time when Lula may be perceived as aligning too closely with developed countries. While true, these remarks also express what appears to be Lula's personal philosophy of Brazilian foreign policy, and make clear that he buys into the direction that his deputies are taking it. End summary.

Always Campaigning Within His Base

¶2. (U) According to Folha de Sao Paulo, during a speech he gave on Monday, 1 October, President Lula affirmed that prior to his arrival in office, Brazilian foreign policy had been characterized by intellectual subordination and oriented towards the United States and Europe. According to Lula, even after gaining independence in 1822, the country continued to be colonized. This colonial mindset and intellectual submission, Lula went on, is what motivates criticisms of his foreign policy, which he claims greatly increased its focus on Latin America and Africa. In fact, Lula stressed that relations with South American countries have never been better. In addition, contrary to previous administrations, Brazil's relations with Africa are now built on respect and tenderness. "If we can," Lula proclaimed, "we will help, because Africans have helped us for 400 years, and I think it is fair to give back a little."

¶3. (C) In a conversation with Poloff, Paulo Sotero, of the Brazil Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, remarked that by outlining the narrative of a leftist-tilting foreign policy, whether mythical or otherwise, Lula can construct a legacy that he can use to remain influential within his base beyond his presidency, while at the same time placating a base that did not expect him to be as economically orthodox as he has been. Recent forceful statements defending Iran against Western pressure, asserting sovereignty against foreign interests in the Amazon region, and the statements made in his most recent speech, Sotero

noted, can be seen through this prism.

¶4. (C) Sotero also intimated that Lula's comments regarding the continued colonization of Brazil reflect a genuine mindset--felt by not just Lula, but by Deputy Foreign Minister Samuel Pinheiros Guimaraes, and to a lesser extent Foreign Minister Celso Amorim--that is highly sensitive to perceived personal slights and defensive about Brazil not being considered an equal in the world stage.

Break from the Past?

¶5. (C) The one aspect where Lula's foreign policy and rhetoric represents a real break from the past, Sotero noted, is on Africa. Although there has always been an orientation towards Africa, Lula's efforts there (multiple trips, opening of new embassies, development projects, the India-Brazil-South Africa Forum) and his rhetoric about helping the continent, reflect a sensibility that is mirrored within his base and, according to Sotero, helped get him elected. Elites in Brazil, Sotero believes, fail to understand how much of a driving factor this is for Lula.

Comment: It's Personal

¶6. (C) Lula's remarks regarding the direction of Brazil's foreign policy undoubtedly played well with his leftist base. When taken together with previous statements and actions, however, they must also be seen as reflecting a personal

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philosophy with regard to foreign policy. Lula's pragmatic side understands the value of maintaining good working relationships with the major first-world powers, as evidenced by recent travels to Europe and the United States. At the same time, his political ideology drives him to seek opportunities to contrast Brazil with the "colonizers" and expand South-South relationships. Despite their reputation as self-styled protectors of Brazilian sovereignty, many Brazilian diplomats are chafing at the aggressive way in which Lula's senior deputies (Special Advisor Garcia, Foreign Minister Amorim, and Deputy FM Guimaraes) are implementing and giving further definition to Lula's left-leaning international agenda. But Lula's words and deeds make clear that he buys into the direction his deputies are taking Brazil's foreign policy.

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